United Nations A/C.1/53/PV.21

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First Committee

21st Meeting
Monday, 2 November 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier ..... (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Committee will continue and conclude this afternoon the second stage of its work. Before calling on the first speaker on my list I should like to point out that before the end of the meeting I intend to remind everyone of the rules of procedure to be applied during the voting that will start tomorrow.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 entitled "Nuclear disarmament" on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 is the traditional draft resolution that we have tabled at the annual sessions of the General Assembly every year since 1995. The wide support for L.47 on such an important issue as nuclear disarmament is reflected in its sponsorship which, at this time of introducing the draft resolution, stands at 51. If sponsorship is growing further, so is the support for the draft resolution among Member States.

The resolution adopted as 50/70 P at the fiftieth session in 1995 was the first to introduce, *inter alia*, the concept of a phased programme of reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the concept of the need to commence multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in parallel with and complementary to bilateral negotiations, and the concept of de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons. These three main concepts together with other proposed important interrelated measures form the core of L.47.

The strength of L.47 lies in the following characteristics: its comprehensiveness; its reflection of the position of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries, which form approximately two-thirds of the overwhelming majority of the entire membership of the United Nations; its vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world through the implementation of a phased programme of nuclear disarmament; and its flexibility.

Comprehensiveness is a crucial requirement of any serious proposal for nuclear disarmament and for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The inclusion of a phased programme of reduction of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination is a distinctive characteristic of draft resolution L.47. It also outlines other

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important interrelated measures of nuclear disarmament and is therefore more comprehensive than other draft resolutions on the same subject before the First Committee. In our view, any proposal for nuclear disarmament that does not outline a phased programme of reduction of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination will be incomplete.

We believe that two other elements are essential in any serious proposal for nuclear disarmament. One is the complete cessation of the qualitative improvement and the production of nuclear weapons, or the complete cessation of the nuclear-weaponization programme. That is important because if this element is not there its absence will leave a very serious loophole in the proposal for a programme for nuclear disarmament. Such a loophole would allow the nuclear-weapon States to manufacture more precise and more effective new nuclear weapons while dismantling all obsolete ones.

Another essential element is de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons. As all of us are aware, until and unless there are changes in the perceptions and nuclear doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States, there cannot be positive changes in their negotiating stances, which changes we are very much seeking at present. Draft resolution L.47 highlights the need for de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons and for reviewing and revising the nuclear doctrines of nuclear-weapon States accordingly. Without these two elements any proposal for nuclear disarmament will be incomplete. These two elements also form the distinctive features of L.47.

Of a number of draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament before the Committee, L.47 represents the views of NAM. The draft resolution is not a NAM draft, though, but is the draft resolution of Myanmar and the other sponsors. We believe that it is important to project the positions of the NAM countries and the overwhelming majority of the non-nuclear-weapon States on this crucial subject in the First Committee. At this point in time there may still be differences in the positions of the nuclear-weapon States and some like-minded countries on the one hand and those of the NAM countries on the other. Is it not in the nature of disarmament endeavours that differences exist among countries, or groups of countries, at the early stages of the process. We overcome them through mutual accommodation as we move along in our discussions and negotiations.

We are mindful of the fact that the First Committee, unlike the Conference on Disarmament, is a deliberative forum where the Member States project their political positions with a view to giving an impetus to disarmament negotiations in both a bilateral and multilateral context. For this reason we are trying to project here in this Committee the positions of the overwhelming majority of Member States and the aspirations of the international community. We wonder whether it is really appropriate in this forum to present a watered-down version of the positions of a group of countries until and unless we are sure that by so doing we can arrive at a consensus draft resolution. Such a watered-down version rather may run into strong opposition from the nuclear-weapon States and some like-minded countries instead of achieving consensus or near-consensus on the subject in the Committee. That is why we are trying in L.47 to reflect the positions of the NAM countries and the overwhelming majority of non-nuclear United Nations Member States in a comprehensive and realistic manner rather than presenting a watered-down version of our positions.

Reflecting as it does the positions and views of the overwhelming majority of Member States, L.47 has a vision, the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world, to be achieved through the implementation of a phased programme of reductions of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination, and other related measures as specified in the draft resolution.

Another important characteristic of L.47 is its flexibility. If one looks at the evolution of the draft resolution since its first appearance in 1995, one will notice the degree of flexibility shown by its sponsors. One will also note that L.47 now encompasses formulations that are much more moderate. Draft resolution L.47 has also embraced new measures and practical steps such as de-alerting and de-activating nuclear weapons and the concept of no first-use threats, which have now assumed greater currency and relevance with the passage of time.

Preferred positions of the NAM countries are of course also reflected in L.47. I wish to stress here that they are not offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. We are quite flexible on these matters. Of course, flexibility has to be mutual, and the nuclear-weapon States do need to show flexibility on their part.

In conclusion, I should like to note with satisfaction that since the first appearance of the draft resolution in 1995 there has been a perceptible upsurge of interest in and support for nuclear disarmament. There have been more discussions on nuclear disarmament, with spirited and sharp exchanges of views at times, than on any other subject

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being debated in the First Committee this year. More and more proposals are coming forward on this subject; more and more countries are dedicating their efforts to the cause of nuclear disarmament. I hope that L.47 will, in its humble way, give an impetus to these commendable endeavours and to the cause of nuclear disarmament. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to those Member States that have given overwhelming support to the draft resolution at previous sessions. We hope that once again they will give their overwhelming support to L.47 at this year's session as well.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): While the traditional focus of disarmament has been placed on weapons of mass destruction, we cannot ignore the fact that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has brought devastation and misery to a greater extent. The implications of the accumulation of such arms and weapons are quite far-reaching. They have negative effects on socio-economic development and on reconstruction in post-conflict situations. Moreover, the indiscriminate use of small arms and light weapons seriously constrains regional disarmament programmes such as the demobilization of ex-combatants and reductions in military-industrial complexes.

The close nexus between the illicit proliferation of small arms and other criminal activities clearly underscores the focus to be placed on small arms and light weapons. My delegation feels that a holistic approach is necessary to address the problems brought about by unchecked proliferation of and easy accessibility to small arms. Concurrent endeavours at both regional and international levels should be made to curb the flow of arms.

We appreciate the sincere efforts undertaken by the United Nations in creating awareness among the peoples of the world about the evil consequences of small arms and light weapons. Nepal welcomes the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, whose recommendations merit our support. As the report has clearly suggested, small arms may not create conflicts themselves, but their excessive accumulation, low cost and easy transportation contribute immensely to the exacerbation of conflicts by increasing the lethality and duration of the violence. Additionally, the report refers to the excessive and destabilizing levels of small arms and light weapons, as they have no agreed norms and standards to determine their limitations. We are encouraged by the decision of the Secretary-General to establish the mechanism for Coordinating Action on Small Arms with a view to establishing coordination regarding the issues of small arms and light weapons, including their illicit manufacturing and trafficking, both among the relevant bodies of the United Nations and within the United Nations Secretariat.

Studies made so far of the implications of small arms and light weapons indicate that such weapons have been increasingly used as primary instruments of violence in international conflicts dealt with by the United Nations. We are pleased to take note of the regional seminar devoted to small arms which was held in Kathmandu last year in cooperation with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, and which in our opinion has made a very useful contribution to mobilizing public support for stopping the proliferation of small arms. Nepal welcomes and looks forward to the early convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all aspects. We are grateful for Switzerland's offer to host this conference, possibly in 2001.

My delegation is convinced that illicit trafficking in and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons should be prevented. Some noteworthy steps have been taken in this area. The moratorium placed by the Economic Community of West African States on trade in and the manufacture of small arms and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials are both pioneering initiatives. We recognize, however, that far greater concerted efforts are needed. In this connection Nepal would also welcome an in-depth United Nations study on the feasibility of restricting the manufacture of and trade in such weapons strictly to selected manufacturers and dealers authorized by States.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): Ambassador Henrique Valle would very much like to have been here but he had another commitment so he asked me to convey this message in the name of Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

On behalf of the delegations of the countries that belong to MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and of the delegations of the associated States, Bolivia and Chile, I should like to refer, under the sub-item "Regional disarmament", to the Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace, which was signed on the occasion of the fourteenth presidential summit, held in Ushuaia on 24 July 1998.

In the context of the Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, the parties have agreed: to declare MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a zone of peace, free of weapons of mass destruction; to state that peace is essential to the continuity and development of MERCOSUR's integration process; to strengthen existing mechanisms for consultation and cooperation among its members on security and defence issues and to promote their growing linkages, as well as to further cooperation in the areas of security- and confidence-building measures and promote their implementation; to support at the relevant international forums the full entry into force and the strengthening of instruments and mechanisms for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; to carry out concerted efforts at international forums to make progress, in the context of a gradual and systematic process, in consolidating international agreements directed towards bringing about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects; to make progress towards the realization of the area as a zone free from anti-personnel landmines and to endeavour to extend that zone to the entire western hemisphere; to reaffirm their commitment to broaden and systematize the information they provide to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to establish a uniform methodology to provide information on military spending with a view to increasing transparency and fostering confidence in this field; to support the work of the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Organization of American States, particularly with respect to the mandate entrusted to it by the Plan of Action of the Second Summit of the Americas; and to stimulate cooperation among its members for the exclusively peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy and space science and technology.

The Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace reflects the excellent climate of cooperation and association in an atmosphere of freedom and democracy that exists in the realms of security, defence, confidence-building and friendship among our countries. That constitutes a major contribution to efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

I shall now speak, still on behalf of the countries of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and the associated States, Bolivia and Chile, on agenda item 71 (t) "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

A little more than a year after the entry into force of the Convention we are very gratified to note the progress achieved in the implementation of this capital instrument for disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Convention has been ratified by more than 120 States. Nevertheless, despite rapid progress in the membership, much more remains to be done to realize our aspiration to give the Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons breadth and make it universal.

Even before the Declaration of Ushuaia to which I have just referred, the Declaration of Mendoza in 1993 anticipated the intention of our countries to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. All the States of MERCOSUR have signed the Chemical Weapons Convention and have either ratified it or are in the process of completing internal procedures for ratification.

The Group wishes to praise the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ambassador José Mauricio Bustani, for his dynamism and efficiency. As he himself declared only a few days ago to the Committee, despite all the achievements of the Organization in its short life, it still has titanic tasks before it. By the year 2007, for instance, 8 million items of chemical ammunition must be destroyed, many of them situated in countries at present encountering difficult economic conditions. Similarly, activities to verify the chemical industry must be pursued. Since these are measures related to promoting mutual confidence, the international community must remain vigilant so that the terms of the Convention will be rigorously applied to all member States.

The countries of MERCOSUR and the associated States would like to implement the Convention in the most comprehensive manner possible. With this in view, in Rio de Janeiro, with the technical support of the OPCW, a seminar for Latin-American and Caribbean countries was organized in order to improve the capacity of the national authorities to make statements and carry out inspections.

The seminar lends substance to the other aspect of the Convention, the cooperation component. In addition to cooperation in the realm of technology, the machinery of the Convention should be used to promote legitimate trade in chemical substances. Not to do so would be to contribute to weakening this model instrument for disarmament and non-proliferation.

More than 80 years have passed since chemical warfare was waged outright in the fields of Flanders. Since then millions of human beings have suffered this horrible

fate. We must make sure that chemical weapons will be locked away forever in their Pandora's box. The Convention and the OPCW are the instruments to eradicate this malignancy from the face of the earth. The States of MERCOSUR and associates are prepared to support this effort. That is why they support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38, presented by the delegations of Canada and Poland.

Mr. Lahiri (India): My delegation has requested the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.16, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger".

It has now become abundantly clear that despite all talk of assured second-strike capability in cold war nuclear doctrines, the actual operational configuration of nuclear weapons was for launch on warning. Since the intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) of the two then super-Powers took 30 minutes from lift-off to detonation, and while submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) took as little as 10 to 12 minutes, the time for the highest national authorities to take a decision which could determine the fate of human society was about three minutes for ICBMs and virtually zero for SLBMs, taking into account the time required for detection, assembling a crisis team and executing a decision to retaliate. This was the true nature of the horrendous risk of unintentional or accidental use that the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons posed to the people of the world.

From all the accounts available to us now from hands-on experts from the nuclear-weapon States, this dangerous operational configuration of nuclear weapons continues even after the end of the cold war, posing risks to humanity which are completely unacceptable and totally divorced from the political realities of the post-cold-war world. The numerical reductions under START have not even begun to address this issue. Indeed, there are budding Dr. Strangeloves who are eagerly scanning for all sorts of hypothetical dangers lurking over the horizon, to which these frightening nuclear capacities with their hair-trigger-alert configurations can be hooked up.

On 25 January 1995 the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched a research rocket skywards from an island off Norway. It was picked up by a Russian radar installation 470 miles away. To the Russians the trajectory apparently resembled that of a Trident missile launched from a United States submarine. Within minutes Russia's nuclear command and control system was placed on a higher level of alert, and President Yeltsin apparently activated his nuclear briefcase in order to be able to issue launch orders if necessary. The fate of human society at that moment hung in the balance.

This and other similar events led to a study by the United States Congressional Budget Office on approaches to reducing the chances of inadvertent nuclear war. One of these studies now under way apparently involves a series of steps that the United States and Russia could take to reduce or stand down the alert status of their nuclear forces.

There is broad support today, including among the most knowledgeable and experienced past practitioners of nuclear deterrence, that immediate steps are necessary to dissipate this shadow hanging over mankind's future through measures such as de-alerting nuclear forces and adopting no-first-use policies. Among proponents of this view are Robert McNamara, the former United States Secretary of Defense; Alan Cranston, former United States Senator; General Charles Horner, the allied air force commander during the Gulf War and now at the Stimson Centre; Bruce Blair, former launch control officer in the Air Force and now a leading command and control authority at Brookings; Frank von Hippel, Assistant Director for Nuclear Security during 1993-1994 and now at Princeton; Jonathan Schell, author of *The Fate of the Earth* and "The Gift of Time: The Case for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons"; Major-General Burns, former Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), now at the Stimson Centre; Fred Ikle, former ACDA Director; and Roger Molander, nuclear war advisor at the United States National Security Council 1968-1979 and now at Rand. In addition, non-governmental organizations such as Pugwash, led by its President Josef Rotblat, and the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, which is leading the Abolition-2000 campaign, strongly support a de-alerting call.

A further benefit of de-alerting would be immediately to bring other nuclear-armed countries into the dialogue on reducing nuclear dangers. Whatever one may think of the refusal of the United Kingdom, France and China to participate in numerical reductions until the arsenals of the United States and Russia are brought below a certain threshold, it would be very difficult for them to refuse to participate in discussions on steps to reduce nuclear dangers through de-alerting, *et cetera*.

What is perfectly clear is that these matters are of legitimate concern to the international community as a whole and that nuclear-weapon States cannot claim the right to discuss these issues in a cabal of their own when the consequences of nuclear accidents flowing from their

nuclear doctrines would have disastrous effects on all the peoples of the world.

These are the issues which draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.16 seeks to begin to address. The delegation of India has held intensive consultations over the past three weeks to ascertain the views of delegations in the Committee on the draft resolution. It is clear that the concerns being addressed in it are widely shared. Several of the suggestions made by various delegations have been incorporated.

Consultations are still in progress with several interested delegations regarding the text of operative paragraphs 1 and 2, particularly on the question of the States which should be addressed. As a State possessing nuclear weapons it would scarcely have been appropriate for India to call upon the five nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to submit to disciplines in the matter of reducing nuclear dangers while we ourselves stayed out of accepting similar obligations. On the other hand, a number of delegations have indicated to us their view that the draft resolution, aimed at urgent action to reduce nuclear dangers, should be addressed for the present only to the five NPT nuclear-weapon States because these countries possess the largest arsenals and some of them also maintain nuclear doctrines rooted in the cold war mind-set. If we find broad support for this view we would have no difficulty in reflecting this appropriately in the text of operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution before the Committee acts upon this draft. We would like to emphasize that operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, requiring concrete action to reduce nuclear dangers, is the crux of the draft resolution, and that is what we would like to concentrate on.

My delegation will seek action on this draft resolution as soon as consultations with various delegations have been completed.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): It is a personal source of pleasure for me to take the floor under your chairmanship, Sir. The delegation of Egypt has the honour to present, on behalf of States members of the League of Arab States, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.1 under agenda item 74 entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

In order to accommodate the different concerns of the many interested delegations, the draft was the subject of intensive consultations which led to the submission of this revised text. This new draft is based on the resolution adopted last year by the General Assembly under the same agenda item. It does, however, take into account the prevailing realities as they stand today in the region of the Middle East.

Such realities underline a basic fact in the Middle East, namely, that Israel remains the only State in the region which has not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and that is exactly what the seventh preambular paragraph objectively states. This, as we underscore, is not name-calling or singling out but is simply a clear and accurate reflection of reality, stated in a carefully measured and descriptive manner. It is, in fact, an invitation to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We have used neutral language that simply states an undeniable reality and is therefore not subjective in any manner, no matter how hard Israel attempts to delude us.

As we stated before the Committee in the general debate, only one country in the Middle East is widely believed to possess a significant arsenal of nuclear weapons. Only one country in the Middle East operates unsafeguarded nuclear installations and activities. Only one country in the Middle East refuses to adhere to the NPT and refuses to discuss the nuclear issue. Only one country in the Middle East refuses full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The identity of that country is now widely acknowledged — Israel. Let us not be deluded. Israel has singled itself out, no one else. It is not our doing. The credit goes back to Israel. Nonetheless the reaction of the international community to this dangerous, provocative and roguish situation, when compared with other examples, remains mitigated and muted at best.

The achievement of universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty remains a cardinal priority not only for the Middle East region but also for the international community as a whole. Universality consolidates the edifice of the NPT regime. This has been underscored by the Treaty itself and subsequently confirmed by the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted on 11 May 1995 by the Review and Extension Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as in the provisions of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by consensus by that Conference. It is for these reasons that we consider that Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT impedes the realization of the objective of attaining universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Needless to say, the continuation of such imbalance and asymmetry in the legal obligations and commitments of the States of the Middle East cannot but further aggravate serious security concerns over the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and consequently undermine the efforts by various regional and extraregional parties to establish confidence-building measures, in particular those efforts aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Regional parties that have renounced the nuclear option and acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States are now questioning the effect of their accession on their own national security. "Has our accession", they ask, "increased our security?" It is a very pertinent question and deserves repetition: "Has our accession", they ask, "increased our security?" How can our security be safeguarded while Israel continues its refusal to join the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards? Arab States have delivered and honoured their promise. Since 1995 the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Djibouti have all acceded, leaving Israel as the only State that still refuses to accede, nor has it declared an intention to do so. The draft resolution is saying only that. Again, this is a factual descriptive statement and is not in any way name-calling, as some would wish us to believe.

A few years ago, as a token of our support for collective efforts, the title of this very item was changed from "Israeli nuclear armament" to "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". The change highlighted an attempt to depart from confrontation, arrive at reconciliation and move towards confidence-building. Now it is Israel's turn to make a positive gesture by joining all States of the region in acceding to the NPT, the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime.

Egypt, on behalf of States members of the League of Arab States, hopes to receive the same, if not more, overwhelming support from Member States for this draft resolution. Last year an unprecedented 147 votes in favour of the draft resolution came as direct support for our endeavours. That support came from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and elsewhere. We hope that this year the draft resolution will receive even more support. The message we see from such support is clear and undeniable, support for achieving the objectives of the non-proliferation regime, the consolidation of which is a solemn duty and sacred responsibility which we should all work and aspire to realize faithfully without any exceptions or double standards.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before continuing the debate on the introduction of draft resolutions I should like to say a few words while the Secretariat is present as to the procedure we will be following in the third stage of our work, that is to say the voting on the draft resolutions. I remind members that this procedure is outlined in rules 123 to 133 of the General Assembly rules of procedure. I just wish to make a few practical comments.

(*spoke in English*)

In accordance with the programme of work and agreed timetable, the Committee will begin the third stage of its work — action on all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 63 to 80 — tomorrow, Tuesday, 3 November at 10 a.m.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the meeting this afternoon, I should like to outline the procedure that the Committee will follow to take action on draft resolutions. At the outset of each meeting delegations will have the opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions. I underline the word "revised". Then I will call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than in explanation of their position or vote on the draft resolutions in a particular cluster. So, no comments on draft resolutions, but comments on clusters. Thereafter, delegations may proceed to explain to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution before a decision is taken. After the Committee has taken a decision on a draft resolution I will call upon those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution after a decision has been taken. Therefore delegations will be able to explain their vote before and after the vote on the draft resolution but must signal that to the Chair.

In accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make statements in explanation of their vote. They are only allowed to make general statements at the beginning of the meeting, or on a new cluster. Again, no comment on draft resolutions but only on clusters. If delegations co-sponsor a draft resolution they do not have to explain their vote. That is quite logical.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, I urge those delegations wishing to request a recorded vote on any particular draft resolution kindly to inform the Secretariat of their intention before the Committee begins its action on

any individual cluster. We must know in advance; if members want a recorded vote, please inform us.

With regard to any deferment of action on any draft resolution delegations should inform the Secretariat in advance. Every effort should be made to refrain from resorting to a deferment of action. Again, please inform us in advance.

I hope that those procedures are clear to all delegations. Are there any comments on that part of the procedure? Think about it. We are ready to answer any questions during the rest of the afternoon.

If there are no other comments, I should like to inform delegations that the Committee will begin action tomorrow on the first draft resolution of the first three clusters contained in the revised cluster paper that Committee members have just received, that is, nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and disarmament aspects of outer space. Tomorrow we will start with the first draft resolution of the first cluster. Action can be delayed at the request of delegations or because they imply financial expense by the Organization, and there we must await the report of the Organization before action can be taken.

Delegations have today also received a letter about the medium-term plan, document A/C.1/53/8. In it the Chairman of the Fifth Committee requests the views of the First Committee on the relevant proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 1998-2001. The document references to the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination that representatives will need are contained in that letter.

I would appreciate delegations conveying their views on the medium-term plan to me as early as possible so that I as your Chairman will be able to respond to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee by the date he has requested me to respond, that is, by this coming Friday, 6 November.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I want to thank you, Sir, for the clarification you have given and the procedure we will be following for the third stage of our work, action on draft resolutions. Is it possible for the Secretariat to give any details as to which drafts the First Committee will take action on tomorrow? A certain number of delegations are following work in the General Assembly on an agenda item on the report of the Organization of African Unity as well as following the work in the First Committee. Is it possible for the Secretariat right now to give details about the draft resolutions on which the Committee will have to take action tomorrow?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Tomorrow, the Committee will take three clusters, namely cluster 1, nuclear weapons; cluster 2, other weapons of mass destruction; and cluster 3, outer space.

As representatives will have seen in the cluster paper just distributed, cluster 1 has draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.2 and L.3. However, draft resolution L.2 will entail financial clarification, so it will not be taken up tomorrow morning. The Secretariat has officers who will go to the main sponsors and co-sponsors to check whether draft resolutions are ready for action or not, and whether with a vote or without a vote, or with separate votes on different paragraphs. We will collect all the information before action will be taken.

As at this moment I believe action will be taken tomorrow morning on draft resolutions L.3, L.10/Rev.1, L.11, L.14, L.16, L.19, L.21/Rev.1, L.22, L.24, L.51, which is the amendment to L.24, L.36, L.37, L.42, L.45, L.47 and L.48. The Secretariat has been informed that L.49 will be postponed.

On cluster 2, other weapons of mass destruction, tomorrow, possibly, we will take up draft resolution L.6/Rev.1, L.9, L.28, and L.38/Rev.1. On cluster 3, outer space, there is only one draft resolution, L.40.

If the main sponsors of any draft resolution consider that consultations are still needed and a draft resolution is not ready for action, they should immediately inform the Secretariat so as to enable it to take the proper action and to arrange the draft resolutions that will be ready for action tomorrow.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I am sorry to have interrupted the procedure of introducing draft resolutions, but this gives members of the Committee time to think about the way in which they understand the development. It also allows time for the Secretariat to think about it. Unfortunately the Secretary has to leave the meeting soon. Are there any comments on what I have just said?

Ms. Kunadi (India): I should like to request the Secretary to read out the list of draft resolutions for cluster 1 because I missed some of them.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Cluster 1 for tomorrow will be: draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, L.10/Rev.1, L.11, L.14, L.16, L.19 and L.21/Rev.1. I have just been informed that L.22 will be deferred. Next is L.24 and L.51, which is an amendment to L.24, L.36, and L.37. I have also just been informed that L.42 will be deferred. Next is L.45 and L.47.

I have just been informed that L.48 will not be taken up but will be deferred. Draft resolution L.16 is not ready either and will be deferred. If there are no more indications I shall read the list once more.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I think everyone is very interested in knowing what will be voted on tomorrow. Perhaps we could be happy that the Secretariat has read out the initial list and in the next 10 to 15 minutes people could communicate with the Secretariat and then the Secretary could read an agreed list, because I find this amendment-on-the-run process a little difficult to follow.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I suggest the following procedure: think about the draft resolutions which delegations wish to defer and then I will sum up at the end of the meeting today. I think that will save a lot of confusion.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We will now return to the introduction of draft resolutions.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): It is a pleasure for my delegation to introduce five draft resolutions on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). These draft resolutions will be considered under clusters 2, 7 and 8.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.28 entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol" recalls the long-standing determination of the international community to ban chemical and biological weapons. It welcomes initiatives taken by some States parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol in withdrawing their reservations and renews the General Assembly's previous calls to observe strictly the principles, objectives and provisions of that Treaty, and it calls upon those States that continue to maintain reservations to withdraw them. I wish to draw the attention of delegations to a minor amendment in the fifth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. The word "recent" in the first line should be deleted.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.25, entitled "United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament", is a new draft resolution that intends to underline the importance of all regional centres as mechanisms to inform, educate and generate public understanding and support in the field of arms control and disarmament. The draft resolution emanates from the twelfth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Durban, South Africa, at which the heads of State or Government welcomed the decision of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly contained in resolution 52/220 not only to maintain but also to revitalize the three regional centres in Nepal, Peru and Togo.

The activities and programmes conducted by these regional centres make a valuable contribution towards changing basic attitudes to peace and security, to the identification of pertinent issues and approaches, especially through the organization of meetings and conferences, and to the promotion of regional and subregional dialogue on disarmament. These centres seek to provide useful insights to common problems and thereby facilitate progress towards greater security at lower levels of armaments. They also serve as a useful forum for consideration of relevant issues and new approaches to arms limitation.

The draft resolution further requests Member States in each of these regions, as well as those in a position to do so, and also intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and foundations to make voluntary contributions to the three regional centres so as to enable them to fulfil their role and to enhance their programmes and activities. It is the hope of the Non-Aligned Movement that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

As delegations are aware, at its fifty-second session the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 52/38 F, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". It has been a long-standing objective of the Non-Aligned Movement and other members of the international community to work towards the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to

disarmament (SSOD-IV). For that reason the Non-Aligned Movement heads of State or Government at the recent Durban Summit once again expressed their support for the convening of an SSOD-IV.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50 recalls the three previous special sessions on disarmament that were held during the period 1978 to 1988, and it calls for further steps that would lead to the convening of the fourth special session with the participation of all Member States, and which is subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives and agenda. Such a session would, *inter alia*, offer an opportunity to mobilize world public opinion for the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as well as for the control and reduction of conventional armaments.

The sponsors of the draft resolution believe that these objectives can be achieved under the multilateral auspices of the United Nations, which should be utilized as a forum to generate action-oriented negotiations. The draft resolution therefore recommends that the Disarmament Commission should, during its 1999 substantive session, again consider the item "Convening of a special session on disarmament" with the objective of promoting agreement on the agenda and timing of the special session.

The fourth draft resolution that my delegation introduces on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement is entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", and contained in document A/C.1/53/L.26. The fundamental objective of this draft resolution is to ensure compliance with relevant environmental norms when negotiating and implementing treaties and agreements related to disarmament. The international community has long been aware of the detrimental consequences of uncontrolled sources of radioactivity and the risks associated with military activities involving nuclear materials. The dismantling of weapons in certain categories requires techniques and methods that would sustain and augment the prevailing environmental standards.

While the draft resolution refrains from making any reference to specific disarmament agreements, it nonetheless calls upon States to take relevant environmental norms fully into account while negotiating arms control and disarmament treaties and agreements. It also calls for the application of the advances made in science and technology in enhancing security and in facilitating disarmament without adverse impact on the environment or on their effective contribution to the attainment of sustainable development. As in the past, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, based on information received from Member States concerning measures they have adopted in furtherance of the objectives contained therein. We remain hopeful that the draft resolution will be adopted by the Committee with the widest possible support.

Finally, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.27, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", underlines the importance of reallocating valuable resources released as a result of disarmament to development purposes and thereby reducing the gap between the developed and developing countries. In the view of the non-aligned countries, this relationship has gained momentum and indeed become relevant against the backdrop of the diversion of a large proportion of financial, material and technological resources to armaments, which has placed a heavy burden on the economies of many nations, especially those of the developing countries. The stark contrast between expenditures for armaments and the paucity of aid for socio-economic progress is also self-evident. The draft resolution acknowledges the actions taken in the context of the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and invites Member States to communicate their views and proposals for implementing the Action Programme adopted by that Conference. The Secretary-General is further requested to continue to take action for implementing that Programme and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. We hope that this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Please allow me, Sir, to make a brief statement in my national capacity. Given South Africa's strong support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, I wish to indicate our support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". In this regard I wish to recall that the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at the recent Durban Summit welcomed and supported Mongolia's policy to institutionalize its single-State nuclear-weapon-free status. We trust this draft resolution will receive maximum support.

South Africa will also, in view of its in-principle position in support of nuclear-weapon-free zones, be supporting draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia", L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-

free zone in the region of the Middle East", L.19, on the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and L.23, entitled "Regional disarmament", as put forward by Belarus.

We are a sponsor of L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): I have the honour to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50 on behalf of the European Union, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, which align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the work of the previous Disarmament Commission session and the serious efforts made by the Chairman of its Working Group II on the issue of convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). The compromise paper presented by the Chairman gained near consensus on the objectives and agenda of the SSOD-IV. The European Union contributed actively to Commission efforts and tabled several working papers. This contribution was aimed at achieving the necessary consensus on the objectives and agenda of the special session. We regret that the Commission failed to reach consensus at this year's session.

We continue to support the convening of the SSOD-IV. A new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is justified by the fundamental changes in the international security situation after the cold war. The confrontation of the past has been replaced by new approaches based on cooperation. At the same time, international arms control efforts are facing new challenges. Since the Disarmament Commission session last spring the international security environment has changed further.

The European Union considers that the objectives of the SSOD-IV are: to review developments relevant to disarmament and non-proliferation; to assess the present international situation in order to identify new opportunities in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation; and to establish consensus on methods, priorities and objectives for a new and balanced programme of future action on arms control and disarmament reflecting the realities of today.

The importance of holding a new special session is widely recognized in all groups, as indicated by the statements in the general debate this year. In 1997 the resolution on holding a special session devoted to disarmament was passed without a vote. The EU hopes that consensus will also be reached during this year's Assembly session.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50 recommends that this issue be taken up at the 1999 session of the Disarmament Commission. This will be the fourth year that the Commission has addressed the matter. Nonetheless, the European Union would support a further effort to secure consensus on this important issue. We consider that the Chairman's paper of the last session, which is the product of three years of painstaking work, offers the only realistic basis for such an effort. If consensus can be reached, the next session of the General Assembly could set a date for the special session and launch the preparatory process.

On this basis the European Union is ready to join the consensus on a draft resolution recommending that the Disarmament Commission should promote agreement on the objectives and agenda of an SSOD-IV. But it is important that the draft resolution should not in any way prejudice the substance of the Commission's deliberations. We look forward to working with the sponsors of L.50 to this end.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Ecuador today takes over as Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group for the month of November, and it is in this capacity that my delegation received the Group's request to make the following declaration on the Group's behalf.

One of the essential purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and of the establishment of the Organization itself was to establish a legal and political framework that would be conducive to international peace and security. Over time the concept has indeed gained ground that there can be no development unless peace and security have previously been properly rooted in the international community. Without effective measures that can make decisive contributions to the disarmament of the various States, such a climate will remain merely a rhetorical aspiration, lacking in content.

In this context it is important to recall General Assembly resolution 39/63 J of 12 December 1984. It referred to the need for a world disarmament campaign, which was welcomed by the region on 3 December 1986

with the establishment of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development, with headquarters in Lima. The prompt and effective reaction of Latin America and the Caribbean to this important campaign affords clear evidence of the continent's political will to promote all measures that would make it possible to bring about peace and security in a broad sense and give rise to very concrete initiatives relating to disarmament.

In this connection a close examination of recent events in the region related to disarmament and international security would make it apparent that it has very good credentials in this field, bearing in mind the signature and ratification by the countries of the region of the main disarmament treaties. There is, therefore, an important "critical mass" that testifies to the region's clear interest in making tangible contributions to the creation of a way of life that is in conformity with international law and with the Charter of the United Nations as far as international peace and security are concerned.

The foregoing leads us to call for strong support from the international community and the United Nations so that the Centre, established more than a decade ago, can enter into effective operation. In keeping with that legal framework, we are convinced that the work, activities, exchanges of ideas, seminars and other undertakings, given sufficient material and financial resources for their genuine implementation, will enable this Centre to become a vehicle for initiatives that will not only benefit the region but will also help to define innovative forms of cooperation with other regions.

Similarly, the Centre is certainly capable of providing relevant academic inputs to give political decisions broader and more sustainable content. From another perspective the Centre is part of confidence-building measures that have been under way in the region and of continuous bilateral initiatives on these issues.

Within this framework a centre such as the one I have described will also provide indispensable support for more and better measures designed to make progress on the issue of confidence-building measures and to support and consolidate the relationship among the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Lastly, we would like to stress that we attach the greatest importance to this Latin American and Caribbean Group statement. It bears witness to our clear-cut interest in establishing a centre that recognizes that it has as its legal basis not only a United Nations General Assembly resolution and is thus universal in its vocation, but furthermore also recognizes its roots in the 1984 World Disarmament Campaign.

Mr. Sorreta (Philippines): Allow me to join other representatives in expressing gladness at seeing you, Sir, lead our work in the Committee. Allow me also to pledge our support and cooperation to you and your Bureau and to your ever helpful and accommodating secretariat.

As in previous sessions, the work before us promises to be anything but routine. We are witnessing a larger number of States cutting across regional lines and group affiliations to address the issue of nuclear proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

We support Myanmar's comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament. Myanmar's draft resolution presents the action bench-mark for many States and reflects the determination — and perhaps to some extent the disappointment — of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue. The initiative of the Group of Eight also deserves all our support. That draft resolution seeks to provide a practical and realistic bridge to link all our sincere desires to rid the world of nuclear weapons. We have seen animated debate on this draft resolution, and we are quite happy to note that so far it has proven to be a unifying force rather than a divisive one, with, of course, the obvious exceptions.

The global movement towards nuclear disarmament has also taken on different shapes and forms. We continue to look to the legal avenue with Malaysia's timely and comprehensive draft resolution based on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*. The Philippines gives its full support to Malaysia's draft resolution.

On the legal front, ironically, attempts to include nuclear weapons as prohibited weapons in the Statute of the International Criminal Court in Rome this year were not very successful. The Philippines finds it even more ironic that certain non-State actors had helped to make this more difficult to accomplish by formally questioning the motives of States wishing to equate nuclear weapons with other weapons of mass destruction and other prohibited weapons.

The Philippines, which a decade ago had already established itself in its Constitution as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, supports Mongolia's draft resolution on a single-nation nuclear-weapon-free zone. While the Philippines

supports Mongolia's draft resolution, it is our position that a State can, as a matter of right, declare itself to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We also largely support the draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere. However, while we were an original sponsor, we have had to withhold our sponsorship over the inclusion of formulations that seek to equate the right of sea passage exercised by ships to ships carrying weapons of mass destruction.

The seas and oceans are no longer as free to be used and abused as some might wish. There are many limitations on the notion of freedom of the seas, not only in terms of passage but also in terms of living and seabed resources. In truth, the seas are not as free as certain Powers would want them to be. For many years States have endeavoured to make the sea safer, regulate its use and exploitation and preserve its natural and delicate environment. If the Philippines is indeed to err, it wishes to do so in favour of the creation of a norm that limits the seas and oceans when it comes to weapons of mass destruction. The Philippines wishes to emphasize that nothing in any of the nuclear-weapon-free zone agreements would limit the right of passage for ships, particularly ships that are essential for trade and commerce.

We also welcome and support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 and pray that there will never again be another need for a resolution such as this.

While we are aware of how difficult nuclear disarmament is, we are hopeful — and in fact are confident — that addressing the issue of small arms will not be as difficult. While nuclear weapons threaten our very existence, small arms are killing us off one by one, including women and children. The tragedy caused by small arms must stop. We have two very well-balanced and realistic draft resolutions on small arms before us from Japan and South Africa, and the Philippines is proud to co-sponsor both.

The international community's dedication and determination have already proven their worth in the area of anti-personnel mines. In this regard, the Philippines is pleased to support and co-sponsor Canada's draft resolution on anti-personnel mines and commends and thanks Canada for its tireless and resolute efforts and those of other States on behalf of the Ottawa Convention. The Ottawa Convention is living proof that States, hand in hand with non-governmental organizations, can actually make a difference.

Mr. Richter (Germany): As a member of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts I should like to contribute to the thematic debate on small arms and light weapons. Germany notes with satisfaction that the international community is more than ever aware of the growing problems arising from the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons. Their implications pose a serious threat to the peace and security of affected countries and subregions and reduce their prospects for economic development, particularly in post-conflict situations.

Various national, subregional and regional initiatives have been launched to tackle this problem. Germany not only welcomes this positive development but also has contributed actively to it within the European Union and in several international forums, such as the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and light weapons and through the establishment of a group of interested States on the basis of resolution 52/38 J that was adopted by consensus at last year's session of the General Assembly. Germany is fully committed to making further progress.

Though I appreciate regional and subregional activities on small arms, let me also briefly point out their deficiencies. None of the regions has yet taken a unified approach as regards the whole spectrum of necessary actions, that is, to reduce effectively the uncontrolled stockpiles in affected countries and to prevent such accumulations occurring in future. Moreover, significant differences exist in the degree to which regions and subregions have committed themselves to take action. Except for the Organization of American States (OAS) Convention, actions taken up to now are far from covering the whole of the regions concerned. Finally, so far there is no internationally agreed and globally applied — let alone legally binding — instrument in place to counter effectively the excessive accumulation of small arms.

Against this background, Germany sees an urgent need for the international community of States to embark on a dual-track approach which addresses both preventive and reactive reduction measures in parallel, as the expert panel suggested in its 1997 report. Reactive reduction measures alone would fail to achieve the purpose if at the same time the countries or subregions concerned were not sealed against the further influx of small arms and if major suppliers continued transferring arms regardless of the end user and did not restrict their arms transfers in a responsible manner.

In turn, focusing only on preventive measures will not help affected countries in reducing the excessive accumulations of small arms over which they have lost control. Furthermore, the existing large and uncontrolled stockpiles in affected countries today constitute probably the most important source for the illicit circulation of weapons. Therefore a failure to address these stockpiles will render preventive measures less effective.

With respect to reactive reduction measures in affected countries or subregions, Germany recognizes the necessity for a tailored approach to every specific case. However, one should not neglect the relevance of experience gained in past operations and the common features of such actions in which the international community is involved in many ways. Why should it start from scratch with everything the same again despite all the experience gained in the past? All countries involved want to be reassured that their contributions are not made to no avail.

One important lesson learned, particularly with regard to post-conflict situations, is that practical disarmament measures, such as arms collection and destruction in conjunction with demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, have to be embedded in a sound concept of consolidating peace. It includes acceptable political solutions to the root causes of conflict, confidence-building measures as incentives for the voluntary surrender of arms, and a proportional and integrated approach towards security and development in order to sustain disarmament and peace consolidation.

Against this background it seems to be reasonable to develop at the international level a conceptual framework for practical disarmament measures in support of peace consolidation which could serve as a guideline to be applied as the situation requires. Such a useful tool would facilitate the engineering of specifically tailored subregional programmes while at the same time ensuring the coherence and consistency of international efforts.

The Disarmament Commission is in its third year of work on such a concept. Germany appeals to all Member States to make every effort to enable the only deliberative disarmament body of the United Nations to adopt a set of meaningful guidelines during its third session on this issue, in spring 1999.

Regarding preventive measures, regional and subregional approaches are viable steps on the way to a comprehensive prevention of the destabilizing accumulation of small arms. However, in view of the global nature of their uncontrolled and excessive circulation and dissemination, which are not confined to subregions or regions, and in view of the many differences and loopholes within and between the regional and subregional initiatives, Germany sees an urgent need for global concerted action. My delegation notes with satisfaction, though, that the deliberations in this Committee have shown that the international community of States more and more recognizes the urgency of global action.

It is for this reason that Germany very much welcomes and has actually co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13, entitled "Small arms", which has been submitted by the delegation of Japan. I wish to underline in particular the suggestion made in operative paragraph 1 that the General Assembly

> "*Decides* to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects not later than 2001".

With regard to the scope of such a conference, my delegation holds the view that it must be wide enough to cover all relevant issues associated with the multifaceted small arms problem. Limiting the scope to combating the illicit arms trade only in its traditional understanding, that is, criminal breaches of existing arms legislation and import or export controls, would be pointless and would not tackle the relevant issues. It would only duplicate the work done by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

A sober analysis, however, leads to the conclusion that, for example, criminal breaches of export controls in producing countries is just one of the various reasons for the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms in conflict areas and does not even constitute the main source of it. Since most small arms start life legally before ending up in the hands of armed factions and sectors of the population, other important factors have to be considered as well, such as covert supply by Governments to non-State entities; irresponsible though authorized sale of weapons surplus for purely commercial purposes; lack of State control over State or private arms holdings including so-called losses of security forces due to theft, corruption, or ethnic and political affinities; and the deliberate distribution of weapons by Governments or opposition forces to the population in times of crisis or internal conflict.

In civil wars the collapse of government control often entails the fragmentation of State arms holdings, which are inherited by competing factions and armed parts of the

population. Thus, legally acquired weapons often acquire an uncontrolled status, which is one of the main sources of the destabilizing accumulation of small arms in our day. It is not clear, and no internationally agreed common definition exists, whether, or at what point in time, these uncontrolled weapons change their legal status and become illegal or illicitly owned arms.

My delegation has serious doubts whether the term "illicit arms trade" is appropriate to cover all these grey areas regarding possession, transfer and circulation of small arms. It is for this reason that Germany attaches great importance to a wide scope for the international conference, which would allow us to address all relevant aspects associated with this multifaceted problem. It is our understanding that the scope, which is defined in operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution L.13 by the term "illicit arms trade in all its aspects" — and let me repeat, "in all its aspects" — allows for such a proper reflection of all relevant aspects.

Many of these relevant issues have been highlighted in the Secretary-General's 1997 report on small arms which was prepared with the assistance of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Donowaki. My delegation trusts that in accordance with operative paragraph 3 (b) of the draft resolution before us, this report will be given due attention by the Secretary-General and the recently established new group of governmental experts, as well as by Member States in preparing recommendations on the details of the scope and the agenda of the conference.

While my delegation appreciates the conceptual role of the new group of governmental experts in preparing recommendations on the objective, scope, agenda, dates and venue of the international conference, we also wish to underline that the preparatory process must be open-ended and reflect the various views expressed by all interested Member States.

Bearing in mind that according to operative paragraph 2 of this draft resolution a decision on the venue of the international conference will be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, let me on behalf of the German delegation thank the Government of Switzerland for its generous offer to host this conference in Geneva. Let me also take the opportunity to thank the delegation of South Africa for preparing draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41 on the illicit traffic in small arms, which Germany has also co-sponsored. Those draft resolutions point in the right direction and are important steps towards effective international action to solve the small arms problem. They deserve the broadest possible support by Member States.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We welcome this opportunity to offer our views on the draft resolution dealing with the issue of the prevention of the violent disintegration of States, document A/C.1/53/L.44. While we do not necessarily believe that the First Committee of the General Assembly is the most appropriate place to deal with this issue, we are nevertheless convinced that the draft resolution addresses one of the most timely and burning issues on the agenda of the international community and thus of the United Nations. We are therefore grateful to the main sponsor and to the co-sponsors for bringing this matter to our attention.

At the same time we think that the text in its current form does not properly address the problem and that it thus constitutes a lost opportunity. Quite some time ago we made amendments that would, in our view, considerably improve the text, and we have noted with regret that the sponsors have been able to accommodate only a few points of concern. I should like briefly to offer the reasons why we continue to believe that L.44 falls short of what it could and should achieve.

The sponsors have accepted language that states that conflicts within States constitute at present the majority of violent — that is, armed — conflict. It is certainly a useful addition to the text but it seems to us, in a context dealing with prevention, logical and indeed inevitable also to say that the United Nations system should promote efforts aimed at preventing such conflicts. As is generally known, such conflicts often have their root causes in tensions between central Governments and communities within the States concerned or among such communities. We have therefore suggested language which would, in very general terms, underline the need for the United Nations system to address such problems.

In this context we do not share the view of those who see a necessary contradiction or competition between the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. We are rather of the opinion that existing international law provides a solid basis for considering these principles as mutually reinforcing. It is along these lines that we have made suggestions to the sponsors of the text, and we remain very open to further discussions with them or any other delegation interested in our suggestions. We would be very glad to find ourselves in a position to support a General Assembly resolution dealing with an issue which is of the utmost importance to us.

Mr. Miranda (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): For Peru the increase at the international level in the manufacture of and illicit trafficking in small arms, as well as the growing links between this traffic and other types of criminal conduct such as drug-trafficking and terrorism, is a matter of grave concern. As we said in our statement in the general debate in this Committee, weapons in that low-cost, easy-maintenance category are tools for violence which have an impact on civilian security. Therefore controlling traffic in these weapons has a humanitarian dimension.

Illegally obtained, these articles encourage violence by criminal organizations and put at risk the well-being of peoples, their economic and social development and their right to live in peace. They represent a threat to the security of States, and the treatment has to be linked to a strategy of prevention or solution of armed conflict. We consider it essential that all States — particularly those that produce, export or import small arms as well as explosives, ammunition and other related material — should take the necessary measures to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit traffic.

We also think that international cooperation is very important, such as consultations and exchanges of information and other appropriate measures to strengthen international machinery in this field. In this manner we would jointly and in a coordinated fashion confront illicit traffic in small arms and also ammunition, explosives and other related material. The Government of Peru has recently adopted a law against the possession of weapons of war and for their regulation, considering that they should be left exclusively in the hands of the armed forces, the national police and other public security services. Peru has also signed the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS) in November 1997. That Convention has been submitted by the President of the Republic to the Congress for assessment and future ratification. We consider that the text of that Convention should serve as a model for the elaboration of related international instruments, preferably within the context of the United Nations.

Similarly, Peru participated in the working group of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission which prepared model regulations for the control of international traffic in small arms, their parts and components and ammunition, which was adopted by the OAS General Assembly in its resolution 1543 in June this year. We would like to state that the Inter-American provisions are fully in conformity with Peruvian legislation in this field. For example, a relevant national body has been bringing the registry for transfers into line with the recommendations of the model regulations.

We support the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene a conference to draft an international convention in this field, and we commit ourselves to participating actively in this process. Peru, as a sponsor of General Assembly resolution 52/38 J, adopted last December for the same reasons I outlined earlier, is now co-sponsoring draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.13, entitled "Small arms" and introduced by Japan, and L.41, entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms" and introduced by South Africa.

Our country is committed to general and complete disarmament under strict international control as a central element of security and as the essential objective of the international community. Therefore we are parties to the principal international instruments regulating non-proliferation and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and those having indiscriminate effects.

We participated particularly in the so-called Ottawa process, which led to the elaboration and adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Peru deposited its instrument of ratification on 17 June, thus reaffirming our international stance in favour of disarmament, particularly in favour of those specific measures having a high content of humanitarian value. The prompt coming into force of this Convention, little more than a year after its adoption, demonstrates its importance to the international community and provides a formal opportunity to free humanity entirely from the indiscriminate and excessively injurious effects of these devices. We must work jointly and in a coordinated fashion so that the first meeting of States parties, to be held in May 1999 in Maputo, Mozambique, consolidates the advances in this field and reinforces its future implementation. We reaffirm our commitment to this end.

Similarly, Peru in 1996 ratified Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects concerning the use of mines, booby traps and other devices. We welcome its coming into force in future. Peru has repeatedly emphasized the need for the international community to make every possible effort to ensure the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines. We have

consistently supported all efforts to this end in various international forums. For this reason we are co-sponsoring draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.33, introduced by Canada, and L.20, introduced by Sweden. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify both Conventions, thus bringing about the universality of instruments of this type which is necessary for the well-being of the international community.

As a member of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, we fully subscribe to the statement made a few moments ago by the delegation of Ecuador on behalf of the Group. We can also dispense with making any further comment on draft resolution L.25, on regional centres for peace and disarmament, which was introduced by the South African delegation on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). However, we would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance that Peru attaches to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 52/220 of December 1997. In that resolution it was decided to maintain and revitalize the regional centres so that they might achieve the purposes for which they were created. That is why we believe that draft resolution L.25, which we hope will be adopted by consensus, more clearly reflects the commitment of the Organization to peace, disarmament and development, and the contribution that regional centres can make to this end.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before calling on the next speaker may I say that in view of the very large number of draft resolutions for which a deferred vote has been requested I have decided to add to tomorrow's list, cluster 4, conventional weapons, and cluster 5, regional disarmament and security. If delegations wish to defer any draft resolution in these two clusters, please contact the Secretary or the Chairman and point that out to us. I repeat, clusters 4 and 5 will also be examined tomorrow.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): I should like to offer comments on some of the draft resolutions put forth under cluster 1. It is Viet Nam's consistent policy to underline the importance of making contributions to building a world free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We strongly believe that nuclear disarmament must have the highest priority in the field of international security and disarmament. In line with this policy Viet Nam supports all initiatives and measures to promote the elimination of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction.

At this session of the First Committee we have recognized a renewed vigour in tackling the issue of nuclear disarmament, and we therefore welcome the various proposals towards this end. While significant progress has yet to be made in this area, we are still confident that the world community as a whole is forging ahead towards a better and more secure environment. Most noticeable of all, the end of the cold war and the reduction of tension in the relationships between the nuclear Powers also present new opportunities for the United Nations and the world community to formulate effective measures in the field of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, in our view enhanced efforts must be taken towards the commencement of negotiations for concluding a convention banning nuclear weapons. We agree with many delegations that the work of nuclear disarmament is a complex and difficult process calling for innovative initiatives and concerted efforts from both nuclear and non-nuclear States.

Viet Nam is co-sponsoring a number of draft resolutions presented under this cluster. We wish, however, to lay particular emphasis on the draft resolution introduced a few minutes ago by the representative of Myanmar in document A/C.1/53/L.47. Our delegation would like further to underline the view that this draft resolution presents the comprehensive approach towards the goal of nuclear disarmament, which in previous years enjoyed overwhelming support from member countries. My delegation is one among the many countries that are in favour of a time-bound framework programme for nuclear disarmament.

In this regard we would like to recall that Viet Nam, together with 27 other countries, put forward a programme at the Conference on Disarmament for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Viet Nam strongly believes that this proposal is very important and should be used as a practical and rational input for the negotiations at the Conference to reach the goal of total nuclear disarmament.

We are also a traditional sponsor of the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", drafted again this year by Malaysia. The unanimous decision adopted by the World Court delegitimizing the use of nuclear weapons is certainly an historic event and reflects the common view of the international community on the legal obligation of the nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament.

It is also important to recall that the Court finds that the nuclear-weapon States are obligated to commence

immediately negotiations to conclude an agreement leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Our delegation recognizes the common concern that a clear-cut commitment to total elimination of nuclear arsenals has yet to be made. We wish to reiterate the need to uphold the relevance of the Court's decisions. Furthermore, from the opinion of the Court against the threat or use of nuclear weapons it is obvious that the nuclear-weapon States must commit themselves to an international legally binding agreement to assure countries that still fear nuclear weapons against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These common concerns and the serious threat of such horrible types of weapons have been reflected in the draft before the Committee, and our delegation will thus render its strongest support to draft resolution L.36.

In our view, the best way to pursue our ultimate goal, the elimination of nuclear weapons, is through a convention banning the stockpiling and production of weapons described in the draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", in L.14, which is also co-sponsored by our country. Bearing this in mind my delegation encourages all initiatives and efforts that will lead to this goal, including proposals to work for a new agenda of practical intermediate steps, highlighting in particular the responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States, on our way to achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament.

It should be stressed here again that we consistently prefer a forthcoming plan to do away with nuclear weapons under a strict programme with specified timing.

Mr. Moher (Canada): Speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, we wish to present formally draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22. We wish to emphasize in doing so that this resolution has been carefully drafted so as to focus specifically on recent nuclear tests in South Asia. It strongly deplores those tests in a straightforward manner, while noting the declarations made more recently by the States concerned. The draft resolution echoes similar expressions by the Group of Eight, the large majority of the Conference on Disarmament, the European Union, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the Security Council itself, the Chair of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, the South Pacific Forum and the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

These earlier expressions and the draft resolution reinforce the norm opposed to nuclear tests established by the 187 States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and by the 150 States which have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is our considered view that this Committee and the General Assembly, as the global political forum, should confirm and reinforce that norm.

Since our initial open meeting on this draft, held on 22 October, two types of comments or observations have come to our attention. The first category asks why the draft does not deal with this topic within the broader complex of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation issues. Our answer has been and continues to be that there are many other draft resolutions in the First Committee dealing with that broader complex of subjects. Thus we do not see the need to do so yet again in a resolution designed to address one specific matter.

The second observation is that the draft resolution should focus on the future, that is, an outline for a process to enhance peace and security in South Asia. We consider such a draft resolution to be one that the States in the region should address if they so wish. In fact, there are other draft resolutions before the Committee that could be so directed. However, attempting to do so in a resolution dealing with nuclear tests only is not necessary and would only serve to dilute its central message.

Other suggestions for changes to L.22 have been made. Our reaction to those has essentially been the same as that already outlined. First, they merely serve to broaden the purpose of the resolution beyond the central objective that I have outlined, and secondly, they dilute the message contained therein.

In conclusion let us summarize by making five key points. First, the international community has clearly established a norm against nuclear tests. Both the NPT and the CTBT confirm that norm. Secondly, recent nuclear tests, whatever the rationales advanced to justify them, go against that norm. Thirdly, many regional and cross-regional mechanisms have spoken out to strongly deplore those tests. Fourthly, the First Committee of the General Assembly, the global general political forum, should also speak out to that effect. And, fifthly, it should do so specifically focused on that matter only.

We have consulted very widely in the preparation of the draft resolution. We have endeavoured to consult even more widely in the past ten days. Those consultations have

revealed very broad support from all regions for this resolution. There is no legal or procedural matter preventing the Committee from acting. We therefore urge that this draft resolution receive the broadest possible support and that any effort to amend it, thereby diluting its purpose and its message, be strongly opposed. We are also pleased to signal that the draft resolution is now open to co-sponsorship. We welcome all who wish to do so.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and pleasure for the delegation of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", on behalf of the following sponsors: Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Japan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger and Togo.

Since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 52/38 C, substantial progress has been made in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and it is for this reason that the present draft was amended. I should like to take up its various points.

First, the adoption in Abuja on 31 October 1998, just two days ago, by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), on the initiative of Mali, of a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa was a significant move forward in the struggle against the accumulation, proliferation and excessive use of small arms and light weapons. Through these measures the 16 member States of ECOWAS reinforced their determination to prevent the accumulation, proliferation and excessive use of small arms and light weapons in their subregion. The goal is to set up favourable circumstances for socio-economic development.

The moratorium, which takes effect on 1 November 1998, relates to landmines, grenades, portable rocket launchers, mortars and munitions. For the sponsors of the draft resolution it is now a matter of the international community adopting an identical policy in order to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We welcome in this respect the process which was set in motion by the Oslo platform in April 1998 and also by the Brussels appeal adopted last October, the result of which should be exactly what we are looking for.

Likewise we should welcome the conclusions of the group of governmental experts on small arms and the recommendations relating to the accumulation, proliferation and excessive use of such weapons. Thus in the light of these positive results draft resolution L.7 was amended in order to reflect the progress that has been made at the subregional, regional and international levels. The sponsors consider that we should allow efforts to progress towards broader cooperation and better coordination. For this purpose the draft resolution invites the international community to support policies and actions designed to curb the phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all the sponsors for their commitment to the draft resolution and, on their behalf, thank the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and our partners in development for their constructive work so as to curb the phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We hope, as in previous years, that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor initially to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.35, but I will also take this opportunity, with your permission, Sir, to comment on a couple of other draft resolutions and statements that we have heard here today.

I have the honour first to introduce draft resolution L.35, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, the Czech Republic, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, Norway, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and my own delegation.

The problems posed by conventional weapons must be dealt with at the global and regional levels in both their quantitative and qualitative aspects. If war originates in the minds of men, most arms races, especially in the conventional field, are the result of problems and disputes and political competition in various regions and subregions of the world. This is all the more so now, after the end of the cold war. A most important condition for arms control, therefore, is the resolution of conflicts and disputes. At the same time a conscious endeavour is required to insure against the creation of serious arms imbalances in various regions and subregions which can threaten security and stability. This can happen if some regional States resort to large-scale acquisition or production of armaments, while other States in the region are denied the ability to match

such acquisitions. A grave arms imbalance can encourage aggression against weaker States. It can create compulsions for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These concepts are covered by the third, fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs of draft resolution L.35.

In this context the draft takes note of the various initiatives taken in various parts of the world including Latin America and South Asia for conventional arms control, and it recognizes the relevance and value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The draft resolution in the seventh preambular paragraph repeats the belief that militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting regional agreements, and in the next paragraph it also affirms the objective of preventing the possibility of military attack launched by surprise and to avoid aggression.

In the operative part, draft resolution L.35 once again decides to give urgent consideration to the issue of conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. It also repeats the request to the Conference on Disarmament, as a first step, to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements.

We are disappointed that during the past three years the Conference on Disarmament has not found it possible to establish a mechanism to undertake the task of preparing the principles and framework as requested by the General Assembly. We believe this exercise is the right way in which the Conference could contribute in a practical way to promoting conventional arms control and regional and international peace and security. The sponsors strongly express the hope that the Conference will find it possible to commence its work on this subject early in 1999 and submit a report to the next session of the General Assembly.

I would now like to offer a few comments as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", which was introduced earlier by the representative of Myanmar.

In the view of my delegation this is the one draft resolution before the Committee which genuinely and comprehensively addresses the goal of nuclear disarmament in its various aspects. Since the end of the cold war the threat of nuclear war has not been reduced. Indeed, it has increased. This is not only, as some would have us believe, due to the nuclear tests conducted in South Asia, but to the fact that some nuclear-weapon States claim to retain nuclear weapons indefinitely. But some of these nuclear-weapon States have espoused doctrines which emphasize the use of nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear-weapon States. It arises from the fact that there is a halt in meaningful nuclear disarmament negotiations, both bilateral and multilateral. Even if the START II Treaty is implemented it will leave more than 10,000 nuclear weapons in the hands of the major nuclear-weapon States, and for the foreseeable future thousands of nuclear weapons will remain on alert ready to be used at a moment's notice to obliterate the world. These are the real dangers: from nuclear weapons, not from nuclear tests.

A conscious and planned endeavour for nuclear disarmament is required. Draft resolution L.47 offers a political road-map to achieve this objective. This is an ambitious road-map, but it is not an unrealistic one. It envisages a start with a revision and review of nuclear doctrines; with a halt in the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons; with action for de-alert and de-activation of nuclear weapons; with a multilateral agreement in the Conference on Disarmament which would espouse the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons; with a step-by-step process for a reduction of the nuclear threat; with an agreement on non-first-use and non-use of nuclear weapons; and the speedy conclusion of an agreement on an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament which could also be entrusted with negotiating a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution, finally, envisages the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament.

My delegation believes that this draft resolution offers a worthwhile approach that the international community should espouse. It is an approach that is espoused by the majority of the membership of our Organization, the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and my delegation hopes and expects that the draft resolution will be adopted with the largest possible majority.

Finally let me offer a few comments on the draft resolution that has just been introduced by the representative of Canada, document L.22, and on the comments which he offered in his introductory statement.

To the representative of Canada and to his co-sponsors I should like to say that the nuclear tests that took place in South Asia, in particular the nuclear tests that were conducted by my country, did not happen in a vacuum. These were not the first but were perhaps the last nuclear tests to take place. They took place after 2,000 nuclear tests

had been witnessed in the world. Therefore, we believe that it is unfair and unjust to focus attention for castigation on these tests only.

A norm is violated when a norm is accepted or is an obligation. The norm of nuclear testing was not accepted by my delegation, specifically — as we stated here in this room some years ago — because we knew and felt that our neighbour might test and we might have to respond. We deliberately did not accept the obligation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), knowing that we might have to respond. Indeed, article IX of the CTBT recognizes the right of a country to respond in case a nuclear test takes place which threatens its security. Let my colleague from Canada read the CTBT carefully, read the debates on article IX, and read the interpretative statement my delegation made on article IX after the adoption of the Treaty and during the consideration of the Treaty in Geneva. He stated specifically "if there is a test by our neighbour we will test", and we did so. We did not violate any norm that we had accepted. Indeed, it was expected that we would do so. We did so to defend ourselves, to establish nuclear deterrence and to defend our security. We would do so again if we had to. We did not violate any norm and we do not accept the kind of criticism that is levelled by delegations such as Canada which have contributed to the capacity of our neighbour to conduct those tests.

Thirdly, my colleague from Canada mentioned a list of organizations and forums which have criticized the South Asian tests. We were not a member of most of these organizations, of the Security Council in particular. I must say we were appalled at the fact that the Council could adopt a decision of such far-reaching import for the security of a State without even fully consulting that State. We are a sovereign country with legitimate national security interests, and we do not accept such treatment. We have therefore rejected Security Council resolution 1172 (1998), and we will continue to reject that resolution because it is unjust and unacceptable.

My colleague from Canada forgot to mention one forum which has also spoken about these tests, the largest forum with the largest membership among all the forums he mentioned. The Non-Aligned summit at Durban adopted a decision which referred to the South Asian tests. That reference was a balanced one that took into account the history of the past, current developments and the future, and I believe that it was a responsible decision adopted after many hours of negotiations, at the level of heads of State, among countries with very different views and interests. We have accepted that decision and are prepared to work towards the normalization of the situation in South Asia on the basis of the approach that is outlined in the Durban summit decision.

My colleague from Canada said that this is a draft resolution that focuses specifically on South Asia and therefore that is all it should deal with. I have two points. First, if it focuses on South Asia, why is it called "Nuclear testing"? Why not "South Asia", why not "The danger of nuclear weapons from South Asia"? It is called "Nuclear testing". It is very similar to a resolution adopted two years ago which did not name anybody, did not refer to any previous resolutions, did not refer to any country and only deplored in very general terms the tests that were conducted then. Why the difference in treatment now? I shall not harp on that point.

If it does focus on South Asia, then it must be a resolution that contributes to the problem that is created in South Asia. It cannot be a responsible resolution if it merely puts on the table a condemnation and expects countries just to accept it. Where would you lead us from here, after having condemned these tests in the General Assembly? Would you lead us backward to the point where we started these tests, where we did not accept the agenda that had been set out *ex parte* in Security council resolution 1172 (1998), or would you lead us to a point where our heads of State have made responsible statements on this issue in the General Assembly, where we are engaged in a dialogue with major Powers, where we are engaged in a bilateral dialogue in South Asia and where we are seeking to promote peace and stability through these dialogues? Should you point us in that direction, or should you point us backward to the point where you wish to condemn us once again? If you condemn us, how can you talk to us? If you think that coercion is the road to bring us to a point of responsibility, then how do you expect us to enter into a responsible dialogue designed to promote stability and peace in South Asia?

You cannot have it both ways. You cannot make us a target and a partner. You cannot say that we condemn you but we expect you to behave well. We are not tame dogs on a leash. We are responsible sovereign States and we expect to be treated as such. Draft resolution L.22 will be opposed strongly by my delegation, as will any other draft that is based on this discriminatory approach. My delegation reserves the right to move amendments to this draft resolution, and we shall do so. We expect and hope that all those fair-minded countries, especially our fellow

members of the Non-Aligned Movement, will not support this discriminatory draft resolution.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to comment on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.16, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", introduced by the representative of India. We have some problems with it.

First, it is my impression that almost all its contents have already been reflected in other draft resolutions, such as those on nuclear disarmament, security guarantees for non-nuclear States and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Those resolutions are more comprehensive and more detailed. Therefore my delegation cannot but conclude that it does not seem necessary to submit this draft resolution, which repeats the contents of others.

Secondly, it is known to all that nuclear danger is not confined to nuclear weapons but also includes nuclear-weapons proliferation and even incidents at civilian nuclear facilities. The latter two factors are just as likely to increase nuclear danger. Since draft resolution L.16 specially concerns the reduction of nuclear danger, it should logically include all aspects of the reduction of nuclear danger, but the sponsor limits the contents to the danger of nuclear weapons only. Even so it wittingly or unwittingly omits other aspects such as nuclear-weapons proliferation. Obviously the draft is not comprehensive enough.

Thirdly, it should particularly be pointed out that operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution generally requests Member States to

> "provide the Secretary-General information on the measures undertaken towards implementation of this resolution or efforts undertaken by them to promote the objectives envisaged in this resolution".

This cannot but bring to mind the background situation in which in May this year, having blatantly conducted nuclear tests, the sponsor declared itself a nuclear-weapon State but was resolutely rejected by the international community. As a result it inevitably arouses people's concern as to the real intent of the sponsor in producing this draft resolution.

I think delegations have all noticed the formulation used by the representative of India when he was introducing draft resolution L.16, that is, the so-called five NPT nuclear-weapon States. One is tempted to ask, apart from NPT nuclear-weapon States, are there any non-NPT nuclear-weapon States or other types of nuclear-weapon States? In a word, if L.16 is used as a vehicle by a certain country to demonstrate that it has the status of a nuclear-weapon State, I believe that this is something that the international community would definitely not support.

Mr. Becher (Israel): As this is my first time addressing the Committee I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, together with the members of the Bureau, and assure you of our continuing full cooperation.

As in recent years the draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" is once again submitted by Egypt, though it is at best redundant and in fact inflammatory. Moreover, the language of the draft this year is more severe when compared with last year's resolution.

The political motivation behind it is clearly indicated by the singling out of Israel. It should be noted here that no other draft resolution, even the new draft on nuclear testing, mentions any single Member State by name. In addition, the risk resolution focuses entirely on one region while ignoring nuclear proliferation in others. It also neglects the fact that the real risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East emanates from countries which, despite being parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, are engaged in ongoing efforts to acquire nuclear capabilities.

Many developments have occurred in the nuclear realm in the Middle East in recent years: the sombre experience gained by the United Nations Special Commission, the action team of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Iraq, other dangerous proliferation efforts in our region and other current events known only too well to the General Assembly. None of these developments involved Israel. On the contrary, Israel has never been a threat to any of its neighbours, nor has it acted in defiance of international norms. In fact, Israel has always demonstrated the responsibility commensurate with the sensitivity of the nuclear domain.

The draft resolution also creates an imbalance. It singles out Israel negatively even as Israel is simultaneously called upon to join the consensus on the nuclear-weapon-free zone draft resolution. The adoption of such a resolution would move us to reconsider our position regarding the resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Draft resolutions of this sort serve only to complicate efforts to build trust and confidence among the parties to the Middle East peace process, such as the Wye Memorandum just recently signed by Israel and the PLO, and thus may hinder its progress.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to make a few comments on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50, introduced by South Africa, related to the convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Of course my delegation fully supports the draft resolution, but we would still like to clarify a few points to make sure that our position is sufficiently clear. We are concerned about the fact that since 1994, for the past four years, in other words, we have been discussing and adopting by consensus a draft resolution which in practical terms is taking us nowhere, since there is as yet no agreement on the contents, the procedural elements, the format, or anything relating to the convening of a conference that we consider to be of extraordinary importance.

From the preambular language of draft resolution L.50 one derives the conviction that the convening is particularly useful and desirable. For example, in the third preambular paragraph we are bearing in mind the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. We all know full well that subsequent sessions did not produce a final document. In the 20 years between 1978 and 1998 it is as if nothing happened on the international scene, despite the enormous, dramatic and drastic changes that occurred on this scene, with the actual realignment of some countries and the birth of new ones — in short, a change of truly crucial importance. In this sense, we consider that the statement by the Austrian representative on behalf of the European Union on the need to convene such a conference was extremely important, bearing in mind, *inter alia*, the very significant changes that have taken place.

My delegation also considers that the only logical, systematic and inherently balanced way of approaching the issue of disarmament within the context of this fourth special session is in the manner described in the antepenultimate preambular paragraph of L.50, which emphasizes multilateralism. We cannot continue to act within a strictly bilateral context where possible resolution by means of agreement is on the basis of two Powers taking decisions while the rest of the world is absent, or at least is not directly linked to any bilateral conventions.

There are two basic conceptual elements my delegation would like to emphasize: first, the dramatic and decisive change on the international scene, and secondly, the fact that in light of the new elements which threaten the security of States, elements which by their very nature are transnational, a multilateral approach and emphasis is needed to deal with the change, which implies that all States should be represented so that they can express their points of view and find solutions.

Merely from the bureaucratic point of view we have a positive signal that cannot be ignored, namely, the recent creation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs within the Secretariat, which is a reflection of the collective feeling that has not yet translated into the actual convening of a conference. We are therefore concerned that it is not enough to adopt — almost automatically, mechanically, in a linear fashion — a draft resolution by consensus. Of course we will continue to strive for its adoption by consensus, but there has to be some action so that the conference will finally materialize.

To this effect my delegation considers that it is very important to highlight two concerns, one of which we have already mentioned. First, there would possibly be financial implications of holding a conference if it did not produce a solid, coherent document that would constitute a new step forward in the context to which we have already referred, and thus enable us to work together in the future.

Secondly, we are concerned at the possible financial implications of the conference. However — and my delegation wishes to emphasize this aspect very emphatically — every day we are more convinced of the need to hold the conference. We cannot continue to live in a world which, as it were, is not taking due note of what is happening, for example, the tremendous technological changes that are occurring on the world stage and affecting the disarmament process. In passing, we consider quite useful the draft resolution presented by the Russian Federation on the implications of technological and scientific changes and aspects of disarmament.

There is no doubt that the world has changed completely. There have been radical scientific, technological, cultural and political changes as well as changes also in the world's composition with the appearance of new actors in international society, including non-governmental organizations and other actors which now have a certain legal status and are also subject to international law. So we must tackle seriously and consistently the convening of this conference.

One solution we might suggest is that between now and the next meeting of the Disarmament Commission an informal group for consultations could be set up, nothing that would be binding, but a forum in which work could be done and certain basic terms of reference could be devised in order to break the stalemate in which we now find ourselves. On the one hand we keep saying we want to convene a conference, while on the other we are told we cannot hold a conference because there is no agenda, and yet we cannot agree on a minimum agenda. For my delegation, this means that it is essential to find ways and means to elicit support from everyone. We do not have to give such a body a mandate beyond acting as an informal group to establish those terms of reference.

My delegation wanted to make these clarifications known and wishes to reiterate its fullest support for draft resolution L.50 introduced by South Africa.

Mr. Laptsenak (Belarus): On behalf of the sponsors — Barbados, Bolivia, Bahamas, Congo, Fiji, Malawi, Mali and my own delegation — I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23, entitled "Regional disarmament", submitted under agenda item 71 (q), "General and complete disarmament: regional disarmament".

The preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution refer to the well-established principles of nuclear-weapon-free zones, noting at the same time the need to have due regard to the specificity of the regions concerned, as well as to the role of such endeavours in promoting regional and global security.

In particular, the second preambular paragraph welcomes the existing treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, Asia and Africa, and similar initiatives. The third preambular paragraph refers to the sovereign resolve of the States of the region concerned to contribute to, and benefit from, the new European security architecture. The amendments proposed to these paragraphs reflect the position of those countries which are considering the possibility of joining the countries supportive of draft resolution L.23. In this regard we had informal consultations on this draft resolution with the eight countries interested and concerned.

The fourth preambular paragraph is a factual reflection of the major positive developments in the European region resulting from the historic events of the past few years, leading to an enhancement of the atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and partnership among European States. As a result of that, nuclear weapons, as is well known, were withdrawn from the territories of three States, one of which is my country, Belarus. The fourth preambular paragraph is a statement that has been present in a number of resolutions and United Nations documents in recent years. What is important, and I deem it appropriate to underline it here in the First Committee, is the consequences of those developments. Nuclear weapons are no longer stationed on the territories of Central and Eastern European States. That is an unprecedented, positive development that meets the security requirements beyond the frontiers of Europe and gives inspiration to all Member States representing other geographic regions.

The fifth preambular paragraph is a reference to the statement of the Ministerial North Atlantic Council Meeting, confirmed by the heads of State or Government of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, regarding the so-called three nos. Together with the third preambular paragraph, the sixth preambular paragraph reflects the statements made recently by the Eastern European States, in particular in the Conference on Disarmament last summer.

The operative paragraphs are an appeal to consolidate the level of security achieved in the region concerned. Thus operative paragraph 1 urges all the concerned States to exert efforts to continue making it possible to have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of the non-nuclear States of the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

Operative paragraph 2 calls upon all States of Central and Eastern Europe and other States concerned to continue to abide by their nuclear non-proliferation obligations under existing multilateral and bilateral agreements.

Finally, operative paragraph 3 invites the General Assembly to consider implementation of the resolution at its fifty-fifth session under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament".

As can be seen from the text, draft resolution L.23 is based on the factual situation that has emerged in the region concerned in recent years and on the measures of practical nuclear disarmament undertaken by a number of the member States of the region and on the declarations made by other States, including those made by the official representatives of a regional arrangement. Given the importance of the subject matter, the sponsors urge the Committee to adopt draft resolution L.23 with the widest possible support, if not by consensus.

Mr. Wyzner (Poland): In connection with draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23 submitted to the Committee by the delegation of Belarus under agenda item 71 (q), "Regional disarmament" and just introduced by the representative of Belarus, I have the honour to make a statement on behalf of 12 like-minded States from the region of Central and Eastern Europe, namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Despite the lack of clarity in the structure of the Belorussian document, which does not help us understand its purpose, and in the light of previous similar initiatives and recent statements by the delegation of Belarus, most notably during the general debate of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly and its First Committee, we cannot but conclude that draft resolution L.23 is yet another manifestation of the desire of the delegation of Belarus to pursue the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe.

The above-mentioned 12 countries, either collectively or individually, and on many occasions, have already expressed their favourable attitude towards creating nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world, recognizing them as important instruments complementary to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Appreciating the role that nuclear-weapon-free zones can play in promoting regional and global peace and security, they welcome the treaties hitherto concluded in this respect.

At the same time, they continue to believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones must not interfere with existing or evolving security arrangements to the detriment of regional and international security, or otherwise adversely affect the inalienable right to individual or collective self-defence guaranteed under the United Nations Charter.

In this connection they consider that the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe as promoted now by Belarus is incompatible with their sovereign resolve to contribute to and benefit from the new European security architecture, one that is based, *inter alia*, upon the principles of democracy, civilian control over the military, good-neighbourly relations as well as cooperation with, and accession to, the Euro-Atlantic structures, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

It is the view of the above-mentioned countries that internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones can be established only on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Consequently, in the absence of such an arrangement among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the idea promoted by Belarus to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region does not meet the principal criterion that would allow for its consideration.

At the same time they wish to reaffirm their commitment to the NPT and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime as a whole. They therefore consider the calls addressed to them to continue to abide by their nuclear non-proliferation obligations as redundant and out of place, and they see no justification for singling out their region in this respect. In doing so, they strongly reject any implicit suggestions which call into question their non-proliferation commitments.

In conclusion, without prejudice to a possible future relevance of the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe, the above-mentioned 12 countries wish clearly to reiterate their lack of interest in any further deliberations on the Belorussian initiative and urge the delegation of that country to withdraw the draft resolution that it has submitted to the Committee. It is their conviction that, in view of the lack of agreement of the majority of States at the regional level to create such a zone, it would be inappropriate to take up this issue at the United Nations General Assembly.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): It is now 6 p.m. We have asked for a 15-minute extension. We still have four speakers and I still have to inform the Committee of the draft resolutions that will be looked at tomorrow.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): It had been my intention to take the floor with regard to the introduction of draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.49 and L.16. However, given the debate that has also taken place with regard to draft resolution L.22, the nuclear testing draft resolution, and the comments with regard to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I feel it is incumbent upon me to make a few remarks in that regard as well.

I note that the positions adopted by the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in Durban were correctly characterized by the representative of Pakistan, in that the NAM heads of State or Government intend to take a positive approach to the nuclear testing

issue in South Asia. But I would also emphasize that the view expressed by the NAM heads of State or Government during the summit was based, in their words, on a recollection of their principled positions on nuclear disarmament and the related issues of nuclear proliferation and nuclear tests.

The "in principle" position of the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement can be found in the 1995 Cartagena summit document, paragraph 90, in which they firmly rejected all kinds of nuclear testing and supported the total elimination of nuclear testing without any exception.

I turn now to draft resolution L.49, which was introduced last week. My delegation takes the floor to express some concern about the language in operative paragraph 6 of that resolution. We would certainly encourage delegations to look closely at that language, particularly as compared to very similar language that appeared in operative paragraph 9 of the same resolution submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly last year.

In the language of operative paragraph 6 this year we were concerned to note that the drafters of this year's resolution have deleted the concept of continuing efforts aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons and strategic offensive arms. Paragraph 9 of resolution 52/38 M of last year reads as follows:

> "*Encourages* Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States of America to continue their cooperative efforts aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons and strategic offensive arms on the basis of existing agreements, and welcomes the contributions that other States are making to such cooperation as well;".

Delegations will notice that it is the concept of eliminating nuclear weapons that is missing from the language being submitted this year.

We believe that the deletion of this phrase from language that had previously been agreed to by the Assembly, including a positive vote from South Africa, is a matter of concern, and we encourage those drafting the resolution to reintroduce this element into their text. An argument that Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine no longer have nuclear weapons and therefore on that basis this language should not be included is fallacious, because that was also the situation when the resolution was introduced last year. We notice that operative paragraph 5 of this year's draft resolution is the same as that which appeared in previous years.

The concern I have is that the deletion of the concept of elimination of nuclear weapons, or cooperative efforts aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons, sends an unfortunate signal which, of course, is the focus of other draft resolutions, including L.48, which has been submitted to this assembly for its consideration.

I turn now to draft resolution L.16. We welcome the indication by the Indian delegation today when it was introducing the draft resolution, that they are in discussion on making certain amendments to this draft resolution. We welcome that indication because the South African delegation has severe difficulties with operative paragraph 2 as currently drafted. Operative paragraph 2

> "*Requests* Member States to provide the Secretary-General information on the measures undertaken towards implementation of this resolution"

and, secondly

> "or efforts undertaken by them to promote the objectives envisaged in this resolution".

By our own analysis of the draft resolution we believe, and I think it is quite evident from the language, that the only States among the Member States that are in a position to provide the Secretary-General with information on measures undertaken towards implementation of this resolution would be States possessing nuclear weapons. There are no other States that could implement measures such as no first use, negative security assurances, de-targeting and such, which are listed in the draft resolution, although others could certainly promote the objectives and be supportive.

The way this paragraph is phrased at present — and I agree here with the representative of China — is that it opens the door for recognition of States possessing nuclear weapons. South Africa, as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a State which itself destroyed nuclear weapons to join that Treaty, would regard it as a very serious development if we were to support an initiative that opens the door for the recognition of any States other than the States that we are forced to accept under the NPT, that is, the five nuclear-weapon States. All our activities, as indicated by draft resolution L.48 on a new agenda, which was submitted by

South Africa together with other partners, are aimed not only at reducing nuclear weapons to zero but also at trying to get rid of nuclear-weapon States — and certainly not adding more of them.

On that basis we would like to thank the delegation of India for the welcome indication that it is looking at amendments to this draft resolution that would make it more acceptable to the participants of this assembly.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We still have seven speakers. In view of the time I will ask you to be as brief and laconic as possible.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): It was not the intention of the delegation of Egypt to speak, but the representative of Israel has delivered a statement that deserves correction. I have known him for a while and have known him to be accurate, and I was therefore rather surprised to learn that he referred to Egypt introducing draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21. I have seen him here since 3 p.m., and I introduced L.21/Rev.1, not L.21.

Secondly, I should like to invite him to take the floor once again to explain to us where he finds the draft resolution — and I quote his words — "more severe in comparison with last year's resolution".

I feel compelled to refer to the intervention by the representative of Israel as he once again, and frankly to our regret, attempts to uphold his theory of delusion while commenting on the draft resolution entitled "Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". To him and to those who ask the question "Why is the draft resolution focusing on the Middle East and ignoring serious developments in other regions?", we say that Arab countries in the Middle East have indeed met their promises and acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). They have honoured their commitments and renounced the nuclear option. They have placed all their activities, if any, under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. Despite all that they remain under an imminent threat from Israel, which refuses to accede to, or even show a commitment to join, the NPT. Israel continues to refuse to negotiate or even discuss the nuclear issue in any kind of forum.

We may get into hypothetical or even conceptual arguments on the fundamental differences between the region of South Asia and the Middle East. Conceptually we may argue there is no parity in our region and that in terms of obligation and responsibilities and records vis-à-vis the NPT all countries of the Middle East have taken solid steps except Israel, and that the application of an enhanced and more rigorous IAEA verification mechanism, "93+2", will soon be signed as additional protocols by all countries in the Middle East, with Israel outside this regime. Why? Because it refuses full-scope safeguards.

Again, we also fundamentally differ with the argument he puts that Israel has never been a threat to any of its neighbours, an argument which is once again employed in a renewed attempt at distortion. The argument itself is self-defeating. Allow me to furnish some salient but compelling questions, historical in nature, in order to straighten the facts before the Committee and so as to put them in the right perspective when pondering and reflecting upon them.

I list these questions. Why were the nuclear forces of the then two super-Powers in the 1973 war placed on a nuclear alert — particularly Defcon 3? Was it not because of an Israeli nuclear threat?

Another question: is an aging Dimona a threat? What about the contaminating effects of the release of radioactive waste from storage facilities closing the gardens surrounding Dimona several times. Is that not a threat? How did we know all about that? Not from Arab public opinion but from Israeli public opinion and media. May I recommend and invite the attention of the representative of Israel to a book recently published by an Israeli scholar, Abner Cohen, entitled *The Quiet Bomb*. It is hoped this piece of work will help to identify areas of lacuna and to comprehend the anxiety of both Israeli and Arab public opinion.

What is the effect — if I may add to the list of questions — of recent seismological activities and earthquakes on the nuclear structure inside Israel? We would all be better off if reassurances came from the competent international authority, the IAEA. Is that possible? How will that affect underground water resources? Is it not opportune now that the international community should take up the question of nuclear safety inside Israel? Indeed one fails to understand how some can severely condemn and take strong action against one proliferator while all but condoning the actions of another. One also fails to understand how a country can claim to be seeking a just peace in the Middle East while at the same time insisting on maintaining its ability to annihilate its neighbours with more than 200 nuclear weapons.

The draft resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is in fact an understatement. The truth

of the matter is that we should not remain complacent by voicing concerns over a risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East if this risk situation is not quickly addressed.

To the representative of Israel I say that there are no in-betweens. There are no grey areas. There are no attenuating circumstances and there is absolutely no substitute for righteousness which I recommend to the representative of Israel.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I ask all representatives to make an effort to be brief.

Ms. Kunadi (India): I will try to be very brief. At this stage I should like to take this opportunity to present our views on the cluster relating to nuclear weapons, and in particular to two draft resolutions contained in it. We have co-sponsored the Myanmar draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, document A/C.1/53/L.47, and we hope that this draft resolution will receive widespread support, as in previous years.

I turn now to draft resolution L.22, entitled "Nuclear testing", which has just been presented by the representative of Canada. We consider that this draft resolution on nuclear testing is discriminatory, distorted and completely unhelpful in respect of the objectives it seeks to address. It would only result in diverting the attention of the First Committee from its priorities. Such an effort was made at the recent General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with results that are known to all. The sponsors of the draft resolution are themselves beneficiaries of alliances or security arrangements that are underpinned by nuclear weapons, some of them through doctrines of the first use of nuclear weapons. We urge them to reflect upon the double standards inherent in their initiative.

We also wish to ask the sponsors of the draft resolution: in the more than 2000 nuclear tests conducted since the dawn of the nuclear age, how many resolutions have they moved deploring those tests? Or is it that tests by States belonging to South Asia form a separate category to which discriminatory standards must apply? Are these standards geographical, political, or something else? Or is it that the possession of nuclear weapons is acceptable for some but not for States belonging to the non-aligned? Are the States of South Asia being asked to conform to treaties without being parties to them? Should we then by the same token call for universal adherence to the Law of the Sea? If we are to talk of norms, then the norm of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons exists in the United Nations Charter and in international humanitarian law, and is also contained in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons.

My delegation also wishes to state that a draft resolution on nuclear testing which is discriminatory and moulded in a coercive manner will be counter-productive and will vitiate the atmosphere of the First Committee and invariably impact on the forthcoming disarmament agenda. We believe, a belief shared by a large section of delegations in the Committee, that we must direct our efforts more productively and purposefully. We for our part will support efforts in that direction. The sensible course for the sponsors would be to reflect and reconsider whether it will serve any purpose to pursue this draft resolution.

In the event it is decided to press ahead, we would have no option but to table amendments to bring the text into line with generally accepted principles of nuclear disarmament, nuclear testing and non-proliferation.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to make a brief statement on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament" and introduced today by the representative of Myanmar. My delegation would like to add its voice to previous speakers who expressed their support for this draft resolution.

In fact, this initiative addresses concisely the highest priority issue on the disarmament agenda, namely, nuclear disarmament. We earnestly hope that the members of the Conference on Disarmament at the 1999 session of that body will respond constructively to the call contained in this draft resolution and establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, taking into account all relevant proposals, *inter alia*, the proposal of 28 members of the Conference on Disarmament for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation would also like to use this opportunity to express its support for the timely initiative of Malaysia in submitting the draft resolution on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for the constructive initiative of the G-8 in submitting the draft resolution entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world", and for Mongolia's initiative on international security and its nuclear-weapon-free status. They deserve the widest possible support by members of the Committee this year.

Since I have the floor I should like to make a brief statement on draft resolution L.21/Rev.2, entitled "The risk

of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", sponsored by Egypt on behalf of the Arab League. In the view of my delegation the content of this draft resolution is faithful to the real situation in the Middle East. It calls upon Israel, the only non-party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the region, to join this Treaty and place its unsafeguarded nuclear weapons programme under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Despite repeated calls by the General Assembly on Israel to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear-weapons programme under IAEA safeguards, there has been no change in Israel's position in this respect. We firmly believe that Israel's accession to the NPT will lead to the establishment of a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I wish to tell the Committee that the interpreters are willing but their willingness has its limits. I call on the representative of Macedonia.

Mr. Dzundev (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I should like to make a brief statement in connection with that made by the delegation of Poland regarding draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23 submitted by the delegation of Belarus a few moments ago.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I am sorry to interrupt the representative of Macedonia, but I am responding to a point of order.

Mr. Stephanou (Greece): I should like first to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on behalf of my delegation. May I remind you that in accordance with Security Council resolution 817 (1993), the name of the State you mentioned for all purposes within the United Nations is "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of that State. This difference over the name has not yet been settled.

The Chairman: The point is well taken. I call on the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Dzundev (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I will not comment at this point.

The delegation of the Republic of Macedonia supports the statement of Poland on behalf of a group of 12 like-minded States, which is in accordance with their position that the declaration of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned, and also with the position of my Government to become a full member of Euro-Atlantic institutions.

At the same time my delegation fully understands the efforts of Belarus to have its own position regarding nuclear disarmament. The Belarus decision to be a non-nuclear State represents a significant contribution to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons process, something highly appreciated, I believe, by all delegations in the Committee.

Mr. Al-Anbuge (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation first wishes to express its full support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.1, which represents the absolute minimum that could be said on the issue of the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. There Israel poses the principal danger and the main cause of instability in the area because it possesses a tremendous well-known arsenal of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Secondly, all that has been said by the representative of this entity against my country is false, the same fabrications that he echoes every year before this Committee. Here I wish to reaffirm what I said on 20 October this year about Iraq meeting its obligations under resolution 687 (1991) in the field of disarmament, among which is nuclear disarmament.

That representative aims to escape obligations pursuant to international treaties and conventions in force in the field of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the attempt could be described as an abysmal failure, the aim of which is well known to everyone.

Mr. Laptsenak (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to say that this repetition is confirmation of the important contribution made over the past year by Belarus in the field of nuclear disarmament. I have particular satisfaction in saying this because the reasons for my statement will be understood very promptly.

It is very pleasant to us that the initiative my country has been presenting for some time, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free space in Central and Eastern Europe — and I repeat, a "space", not a "zone" — is something very specific that we have explained in a number of occasions in a number of different forums and to various

delegations. This initiative was confirmed and has become stronger. It has conquered and won over the minds of delegations.

I should like to emphasize that the draft resolution presented by Belarus and other States in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which enjoys the support of a consider number of members present here in this room today, also covers other items. It not only refers to a space without nuclear weapons, but has a somewhat different emphasis. It seems to us that it is well worth drawing the attention of those present here to this point, particularly the attention of delegations that have joined the statement made by the representative of Poland.

I very much welcome this opportunity to respond to what has been said by States referring to draft resolution L.23. On the agenda of the General Assembly there are a vast number of questions which sometimes go into specific detail — the strengthening of positive tendencies in certain parts of the world and action that is oriented towards preventing new situations of conflict that might threaten the achievements that have been attained in terms of balance and international security. Let us look at draft resolution L.23, which we have had the honour of introducing and bringing to the attention of delegations.

In the preambular paragraphs we see recognition of the positive part played by the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We refer specifically to the treaties that have been signed on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and similar initiatives in the respective regions. We emphasize the importance of the specific characteristics of each region. We may of course wish to refute the importance of specific characteristics, but what does that prove? In the preamble, as I have said, we note with a positive intent the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba and the Almaty Declaration on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and similar initiatives in the respective regions. Could taking note in this manner be taken to be respect for the positive contribution of these efforts? Could this in any way be considered to be non-constructive? If one places in doubt the positive contribution of those Treaties, what avenue are we to pursue? What would those who oppose our approach suggest that we do?

In the third preambular paragraph of L.23 one will find support for the sovereign resolve of the States of Central and Eastern Europe to create a new European security architecture. The representative of Poland has said that a number of countries have qualms about L.23 and that it does not reflect that orientation towards a new European security architecture. But that is precisely what is referred to in L.23. Perhaps the approach of the countries expressing reservations on draft resolution L.23 has changed in this respect. We would then have to hear unambiguous explanations as to the alternative objectives pursued by the countries referred to in L.23 if they no longer subscribe to that third preambular paragraph.

In the tradition of the First Committee of the General Assembly, the efforts of Member States are supported when they seek self-sufficiency in terms of-defence. The same can be said for nuclear weapons. In the fourth preambular paragraph it will be seen how we express satisfaction. It says that as a result of the historic events of the past few years leading to enhancement of the atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and partnership among European States, the nuclear weapons were withdrawn from the territories of three States and currently there are no nuclear weapons stationed in the territories of Eastern and Central European States. Maybe someone disagrees with that. Someone might think that we should regret this state of affairs.

In the fifth preambular paragraph we take note of the statement of the Ministerial North-Atlantic Council Meeting on 10 December 1996, confirmed in 1997 by the heads of State or Government of countries members of regional arrangements and in a number of subsequent documents. Is something incorrect here? Have matters changed? If there have been changes we should be informed.

Can one doubt that draft resolution L.23 has a constructive approach when we are welcoming efforts to enhance stability and security in Central and Eastern Europe through building a new regional security architecture based on cooperation, shared values and without creating new dividing lines, as delegations can read in the sixth preambular paragraph.

It seems to me that my questions are replies to the comments that were made in the statement by the representative of Poland on behalf of a number of countries. It seems to us that those observations by that group were made without taking into account our draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Two names remain on the list of those who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply, the representatives of Russia and Poland. I ask them to be brief.

Mr. Abdullaev (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: I have asked to speak to reply to a question put by the representative of South Africa relating to draft resolution L.49, and most particularly to operative paragraph 6. But before commenting on that I should like to say that we are often accused of adopting resolutions that later vanish into thin air or remain a dead letter. This argument must be listened to, but one reason perhaps is that we adopt resolutions that contain provisions that are simply out of reach because they are unrealistic.

One such provision, in my opinion, could be in operative paragraph 6, where it speaks of five States — Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States of America — cooperating in the reduction of nuclear weapons. That is not the case. A careful look at operative paragraph 5 shows that all nuclear weapons have been withdrawn from the territories of Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus. They no longer have nuclear weapons on their territories. Furthermore, they are full participants in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In these circumstances, we believe, the States concerned cannot participate in joint efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. This provision was adopted last year, but if we let a mistake go by once that does not mean we have to keep making the same mistake year after year.

As for the reduction of strategic weapons, those States are undoubtedly participating in these efforts, but in our opinion the wording now in operative paragraph 6 adequately reflects the situation. To add "nuclear weapons" here would make the draft resolution unrealistic.

Mr Wyzner (Poland): The representative of Belarus appeals to us to read his text carefully. I can assure him that all 12 — and now 13 — like-minded delegations on this draft resolution have read it very carefully. He raises semantic differences between "zone" and "space". I can only point to the fact that his text begins with the words "recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones", not "space". We try to discuss what is in the draft resolution.

He referred to the support given by other countries to his position. The fact is that Belarus could not muster the support of a single country of the region for his draft, while I was speaking on behalf of 12 — and now obviously on behalf of 13 — countries of the region, nearly all of them.

He then referred to the fact that he has in his text some obvious things to which I think everybody around this table would subscribe, things such as welcoming the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and so on — of course we all do that — and expressing satisfaction that nuclear weapons were withdrawn from the territories of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. We all share that. But I should like respectfully to suggest that these references are already present, where they belong, in about five draft resolutions that the Committee is about to adopt on nuclear-weapon-free zones. As the representative of Russia just reminded us, references to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine are already present in other draft resolutions where they really belong. Do we have to repeat endlessly the same things to serve some political purpose which is of course unacceptable to the countries of the region? Our answer is no.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now read out the list of draft resolutions that will be taken up tomorrow. Draft resolutions that are not mentioned are automatically those that have been deferred.

(*spoke in English*)

In cluster 1, A/C.1/53/L.3, L.14, L.19, L.21/Rev.1; cluster 2, L.6/Rev.1, L.9, L.28, L.38/Rev.1; cluster 3, L.40; cluster 4, L.7, L.41/Rev.1; and cluster 5, L.23, L.34, L.35.

(*spoke in French*)

Before adjourning this meeting I should like to thank the interpreters once again for their willingness and, for their benefit, express the hope that this will not happen again.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.